

work and the work of teachers all across America.

And now, the Secretary and I will give Michael his award.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:20 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Lisa, mother, Ken, father, Jennifer, wife, Aspen, son, and Johanna, daughter, of Michael Geisen, 2008 National Teacher of the Year. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Mr. Geisen.

Remarks Honoring the 2008 Super Bowl Champion New York Giants

April 30, 2008

The President. Welcome. It's my honor. Thank you for coming. Please be seated. Welcome to the White House. It's an honor to recognize the Super Bowl champs, the New York Football Giants.

I appreciate you all coming. Mr. Vice President, thank you for joining me up here as we welcome the Giants to the South Lawn. I want to thank John Mara and his mom, Ann, who's joined us; Steve Tisch and his mother, Joan; of course, their head football coach, Tom Coughlin, and his wife, Judy. He got the extension; that's a good thing. [Laughter] Makes it a little easier to be standing up here. [Laughter]

I appreciate all the players who have joined us today, and the coaches and the personnel that make the club function.

I thank members of my administration who have joined us. I welcome Members of the Congress, Senate, particularly from New Jersey and New York, State elected officials from New Jersey and New York. It's a good thing to be here.

I welcome those from Walter Reed who have joined us today. And of course, welcome to all the Giants fans. [Applause] Behave yourself. [Laughter]

First, it's good to be up here with the Super Bowl MVP, Eli Manning. We have a few things in common. [Applause] We got some things in common. Eli has a father and a brother in the same business he's in. [Laughter] Sometimes the press are skeptical. [Laughter] And he just survived a big

wedding. So I asked him coming in, "Any advice?" He said, "I wasn't father of the bride." [Laughter]

New York Giants have one of the great storied histories of—in pro football. And this club carried on that great tradition. And perhaps—many would say this is probably the most exciting chapter ever written in the New York Giants' football history. After all, you started off the season and allowed 80 points in the first two games. That would be called a lousy start. [Laughter] And then you're playing the Redskins—

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. It's okay, you know. [Laughter] And the game wasn't going very well, as I recall. And then you rallied, and you won.

And a lot of the people that know something about football said that was the turning point. And the winning streak—what's interesting is—six straight games, as I understand, on two different continents. You also had a great road record. I don't know if the fans understand this, but you piled up more away-game victories than—in NFL history. And the good news is, your fans still loved you at home. [Laughter] They really loved you.

You got into the—you secured a wild card. And it was interesting, in the last game of the season, a lot of folks thought the coach would just kind of lay down and let New England cruise to a perfect season—I remember a lot of people speculating about that last game of the season—and yet you didn't, coach. Your team didn't win on the scoreboard, but you won the hearts of a lot of Americans for contesting the game. And you also—your team—[applause]—and it clearly gave your team some self-confidence, because you stormed through Tampa Bay and then went into Dallas—

Audience members. [Applause]

The President. Look, I'm a good sport. [Laughter] We're going to send Jessica Simpson to the Democrat National Convention. [Laughter]

Packers was one of the coldest games in NFL history. You lit up the field like you were on fire. And Lawrence Tynes, who's with us here, came through with a 47-yard fieldgoal in overtime, putting you in Super Bowl XLII. Yes, I knew you were going to

make it. *[Laughter]* I don't know if everybody else did, but I knew you were going to make it. And you knew you were going to make it.

Lawrence Tynes. I did.

The President. And all of a sudden, a 0-and-2 team was about to square off against the 18-and-0 New England Patriots. Now they've got a lot of experts in our society—coach, you might know what I'm talking about—and in looking back, it's hard to find many of the experts who predicted a Giants victory. Most people were calling it a cakewalk; you know, be prepared to turn off your television sets early because this isn't much of a game you're about to watch; when, in fact, it turned out to be really one of the great, legendary football games in our country's history.

First of all, your defense was awesome, coach, and they deserve a lot of credit. And so does your offense. It was the 83-yard comeback drive in the fourth quarter that a lot of folks will remember for a long time coming. Eli Manning started one of the great plays called “the Great Escape”; it ended on David Tyree's helmet. *[Laughter]* So, like, I'm going to take you in the White House, and you can show me how you did it. *[Laughter]* And then Plaxico Burress, of course, caught the winning touchdown with 35 seconds left.

This is a great team that worked together. You won the Vince Lombardi Trophy, and you won the deep gratitude of the 1972 Miami Dolphins. *[Laughter]*

First of all, you've won the gratitude of your fans. New York Giants fans love these Giants. So we congratulate you all, but we're also congratulating your families, your loved ones, those who make the locker room work, the trainers, the people who clean up after you. We want to—we know you played for some—ones who lost loved ones, like the Tyrees and the Maras and the Tisches. I know you loved going down the Canyon of Heroes for the first ticker-tip—ticker-tape parade since before the attacks of September the 11th, 2001. And I guarantee you, there was a lot of New York firefighters and police who were really thrilled to see you.

I like the fact that this team, the coaches and players, offer free camps for kids. Some

of them run life-changing ministries. They raise money for children who have cancer. This is a team that supports the Ronald McDonald House and the United Way, promotes family literacy through Read Across America. It's even helped run a charter school program in inner-city Newark.

I appreciate the fact, coach, that you and your players support our troops, but more importantly, our troops appreciate the fact that you support them. You've come to know the story like I have, of Lieutenant Colonel Greg Gadson. He lost both of his legs while in Iraq. He first met up with the Giants in September, when you invited him to address a pregame meeting that helped inspire the comeback over the Redskins.

Then you saw him in Tampa, when he was trying out his legs that he walked on today to be on the stage with you. He was an honorary captain in Green Bay. He never left the sidelines, despite the 23-below windchill. In your last team meeting before the Super Bowl, Lieutenant Colonel Greg Gadson urged you to have pride in your team and believe in yourselves, which is exactly what you did.

I'm proud to be on the stage with this man. To me, it's a symbol of your respect for our country and your patriotism that you would let Greg Gadson be a part of this team. He has got the Purple Heart and three Bronze Stars, and now he's got a Super Bowl ring minted for a true giant.

So while you're still on your feet: The Super Bowl New York Giants.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:14 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to John K. Mara, president and chief executive officer, Steven Tisch, co-owner, Lawrence Tynes, kicker, and Plaxico Burress, wide receiver, New York Giants; Elisha Archibald “Archie” Manning III, father, and Peyton Manning, brother, of Eli Manning, quarterback, New York Giants; and entertainer Jessica Simpson. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of New York Giants head coach Tom Coughlin.

Statement on North Korea Freedom Week

April 30, 2008

Laura and I send greetings to all those observing North Korea Freedom Week. I am deeply concerned about the grave human rights conditions in North Korea, especially the denial of universal freedoms of speech, press, religion, assembly, and association and restrictions on freedom of movement and workers' rights. I have met in the Oval Office with some of the brave individuals who have escaped from that country. I am deeply concerned by the stories of divided families, harsh conditions, and suffering. The United States stands with the North Korean people in their call for freedom. We believe it is every person's basic right to live in freedom and dignity. We will continue to support the North Korean people as they strive to achieve the rights and freedoms to which they are entitled as human beings. We look forward to the moment when we can celebrate the blessings of liberty with the North Korean people.

Proclamation 8250—Law Day, U.S.A., 2008

April 30, 2008

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

The right of ordinary men and women to determine their own future, protected by the rule of law, lies at the heart of America's founding principles. As our country celebrates the 50th anniversary of Law Day, we renew our commitment to the ideals on which this great Nation was established and to a robust system of ordered liberty.

The American legal system is central to protecting the rights and freedoms our Nation holds dear. The theme of this year's Law Day, "The Rule of Law: Foundation for Communities of Opportunity and Equity," recognizes the fundamental role that the rule of law plays in preserving liberty in our Nation and in all free societies. We pay tribute to the men and women in America's legal

community. Through hard work and dedication to the rule of law, members of the judiciary and the legal profession help secure the rights of individuals, bring justice to our communities, and reinforce the proud traditions that make America a beacon of light for the world.

Nearly 800 years ago, the Magna Carta placed the authority of government under the rule of law; centuries later, the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution marked tremendous advances in the march of liberty. These documents established enduring principles that guide modern democracies. Today, we are reminded of that past and look toward a hopeful future as we work to secure the liberty that is the natural right of every man, woman, and child.

On Law Day, U.S.A., our Nation celebrates our belief in the equality of each person before God and renews our commitment to strive to bring America ever closer to its founding ideals.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, in accordance with Public Law 87-20, as amended, do hereby proclaim May 1, 2008, as Law Day, U.S.A. I call upon all the people of the United States to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities. I also call upon Government officials to display the flag of the United States in support of this national observance.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this thirtieth day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-second.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:57 a.m., May 2, 2008]

NOTE: This proclamation was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 1, and it will be published in the *Federal Register* on May 6.